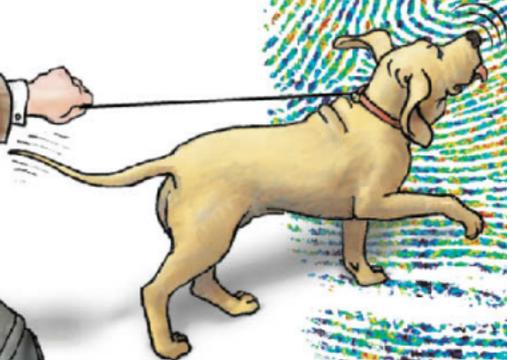
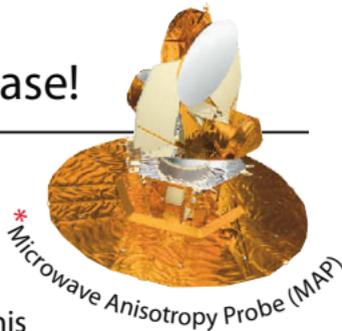


**Does the universe  
have a fingerprint?**





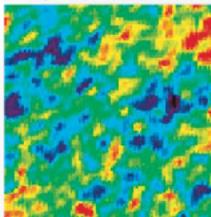
## Yes it does, and MAP\* is the detective on the case!



Small patterns make a fingerprint unique. The keys to the history, content, shape, and fate of our universe are also encoded in a unique fingerprint. This cosmic fingerprint consists of patterns in the oldest light in the universe: the microwave afterglow of the Big Bang. The MAP space mission collects the microwave light in the form of a map of the universe as it was approximately 400,000 years after the Big Bang. This map is like a fingerprint that will help to identify the culprit: the content, shape, age, and ultimate fate of the universe.

There are many cosmic suspects, with differing cosmic ages, differing content, differing shapes, and differing futures. MAP will allow us to match the unique fingerprint of our universe against those in our mug-book of cosmic suspects. Some suspects have fingerprints with details that look like those on the right. The rainbow colors assigned to these images allow us to see the faint cosmic patterns more clearly. Small differences in these cosmic fingerprints correspond to big differences in our universe. For more information on the rap sheet for our universe and the MAP mission go to: <http://map.gsfc.nasa.gov>

Suspect 1



Suspect 2

